AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

WHOLE NO. 1721 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, APRIL 4, 1944 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 34, NO. 14

WE PLEDGE—
1 BILLION DOLLARS
IN
WAR SAVINGS BONDS
FOR VICTORY

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

So many draft proposals are popping up in the nation's capital these days that, in trying to dispose of them, we feel almost as helpless as the Nazi sub-sack gunners in the face of repeated, mammoth air raids by American and British bombers.

For instance, we learn that Economic Stabilization Director Fred M. Vinson has issued a decree which requires some firms, permitted to go back to civilian production of clothing, to produce at cost and which limits other companies to a profit of only two per cent.

If this is to be the guiding rule for conversion to peace-time production in all industries—and there are strong indications to that effect—how in the world are we going to induce business people to expand their post-war production facilities in a hurry so as to provide jobs for ex-war workers and ex-soldiers?

We assume that Mr. Vinson was anxious to make peace-time production as unalluring as possible to prevent jealousy by companies which will not be permitted to reconvert immediately and also to keep prices down. But such artificial and theoretical methods won't work out as planned and, in the long run, are apt to do more harm than good.

The Labor Battalion Plan

Even more dangerous are some of the weird ideas now being advanced as cures for the nation's manpower problems. Instead of quietly working out a practical and sound program, the leaders of our Government are giving voice on the spur of the moment to experimental proposals which are ridiculous on their face. Ignoring the factual report of War Manpower Commissioner McNutt that the manpower situation is good, they insist on tinkering with established and going processes.

Thus we hear authoritative statements to the effect that those classified as 4-F in the draft should be conscripted into labor battalions for service in private industry.

Is it proposed that these physically handicapped individuals be required to serve as draftee pay slaves regardless of their previously established wage scales in accordance with their skill and ability to produce? Does that sound as though it would work?

Is it legal or logical to use the powers of the Selective Service system to compel American citizens, not to fight in defense of their country, but to work for a private company operating for private profit? Could that happen in free America?

Is it conceivable that the workers in a plant would tolerate being invaded by battalions of 4-F's, many of them suffering from loathsome diseases, and being required to work alongside of such individuals? That flies in the face of human nature.

We predict that all proposals of this sort will be defeated. But, regardless of their fate, we protest against the low way these ideas are being advanced. The confusion which they create among the American people is damaging to the war effort.

Political Stooges

It's refreshing to turn from these upsetting manifestations of official bewilderment in Washington to a letter we have just received from a CIO union member anent the AFL's broadcast which explained the Federation's non-partisan political policy.

The writer, whose name we are withholding for his protection, says:

"I have membership in a CIO organization (the United Rubber Workers) but I have never believed in their political precepts, which are tantamount to doing politically what you are ordered to do and have to pay to do it and have it done again and again. I am pleased with your closing remarks which are as they should be, without any bias or political stooges and I thank you."

I think this note is especially significant because it reveals that union workers who have fought long and hard against the evils of bossism on the job are not going to tolerate bossism from the union on political questions. In the field of politics, every American citizen is his own boss and is entitled to judge the record of each political party, in accordance with his good sense, and to vote accordingly.

The CIO Political Action Committee, infested as it is with Communist leaders of every stripe of Red, is bound to fail when it seeks to commit union members wholesale to a specific political party or candidate. The AFL non-partisan political policy wisely refrains from stepping into such pitfalls. It limits its endorsements to members of Congress, who are judged upon their voting records solely.

In this way the unity of the Federation is protected from wreckage on the rocks of partisan politics and the loyalty of the members of the Federation, who want to be treated as free American citizens and not as stooges, is assured.

Red Domination of CIO Political Arm Charged In Dies Report To Congress

Right Wingers In New York Also Allege Capture By Browder of American Labor Party

Washington, D. C.—The CIO Political Action Committee is Communist-inspired and Communist-directed, the House Committee on Un-American Activities charged in an official report to Congress.

Simultaneously, right-wing labor and liberal factions withdrew from the American Labor Party, New York branch of the CIO Political Action Committee, charging "Earl Browder has captured the American Labor Party."

The report submitted to Congress by the investigating committee headed by Rep. Martin Dies listed thirty-four leaders of the CIO Political Action Committee whose records, the report said, proved they are avowed Reds or followers of the Communist Party line.

"They will attempt—indeed are already attempting," said the report, "to do by stealth and subterfuge through the CIO Political Action Committee what they have failed to do when functioning as a political party under their own names."

In the findings the Dies committee declared:

1. Special Committee on Un-American Activities does not challenge for one moment the right of organized labor to engage in political campaigns within the limits of the statutes which govern such activities.

"The irresponsible and untruthful charge that we would deny to organized labor any of its lawful rights does not deter us from exposing the subversive activities of the Communists who have, in line with their current strategy, decided to work through the CIO Political Action Committee."

All existing units of the CIO are to be utilized to the full, the report charges, in carrying out the political objectives of the political action committee in 1944 election.

"Whether or not Philip Murray and Sidney Hillman knowingly adopted a program of action for the 1944 elections which had been set forth by prominent Communist party leaders and individuals," another paragraph declares, "the record shows beyond the possibility of any dispute that well-known Communists immediately assumed important roles in the regional, State and local activities of the CIO Political Action Committee. Murray and Hillman may assert that it was mere coincidence that their organization so completely conformed to one whose pattern had been drawn by the Communists. They cannot deny the presence of well-known Communists in the ranks of the Political Action Committee as it has been functioning from coast to coast during the past seven or eight months."

In withdrawing from the American Labor Party, the right-wing faction declared that the New York State primary election returns "leave no doubt that Mr. Earl Browder has captured the party."

The New York Times, commenting upon the primary election results, said:

"How many of those who voted the left-wing ticket in the American Labor party primaries on Tuesday were Communists one can't tell. Their leader, Sidney Hillman, says that they were bona fide members of Union unions, genuine liberals and progressives, farmers and middle class." On the other hand, their candidates have been following the Communist line, or rather the Communist spiral, pretty closely for some time. The Communist party in this locality has disappeared into something, and the indications are that its farmers and so forth have disappeared into the A. L. P."

The New York Herald Tribune said editorially:

"The A. L. P. launched as a sort of liberal arbiter between the two major political parties, now becomes a thoroughly class-conscious radical party whose support may come to be shunned as was that of the Communist party of old."

Dies Exposes Red Lineup In CIO

Washington, D. C.—The Dies Committee's 215-page report to Congress contained a comprehensive list of thirty-four high-ranking officials of the CIO Political Action Committee whose political complexion was described as "Red" by investigating committee members.

Among the leading names included in this official list were:

Harry Bridges, president of the CIO Longshoremen's Union and member of the CIO Executive Board, which launched the Political Action Committee.

Lee Pressman, counsel for the CIO, whose "associations with Communist-front organizations have been numerous," the report says.

Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union, which "under Curran's leadership has toed the Communist Party line through all its changes in recent years."

Julius Emspak, secretary-treasurer of the CIO United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, whose "record as a Communist is established by his subservience to the line of the Communist Party on several issues."

Michael J. Quill, president of the CIO Transport Workers Union, who "is a Communist several times over, never swerving so much as an ideological jot or tittle from the party line.

Lewis Alan Berne, president of the CIO Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians, who "has been identified as a Communist Party member by numerous witnesses and other evidence."

Abram Flaxer, vice president of the CIO State, County and Municipal Workers, who "has been active in the affairs of the Communist Party as far back as 1936."

Ben Gold, President of the CIO International Fur and Leather Workers, who is "frankly and openly a prominent leader of the Communist Party."

Donald Henderson, President of the CIO United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers, who has been "a publicly avowed card-holding member (of the Communist Party) for more than ten years."

Lewis Merrill, President of the CIO United Office and Professional Workers, whose "behavior over a long period of years brands him unmistakably as a disciplined follower of the Communist Party line."

Lew H. Michener, west coast director of the CIO United Automobile Workers, whose "record with the Communist Party are numerous."

Reid Robinson, President of the CIO International Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, who is "among the shrewdest followers of the Communist Party line."

Others in the list included John T. Bernard, organizer for the UREW; Frank R. McGrath, President of the CIO United Shoe Workers; Saul Mills, secretary-treasurer of the CIO New York Industrial Council; Morris Muster, President of the CIO United Furniture Workers; and Joseph P. Selly, President of the CIO American Communications Association.

AFL Non-Partisan Political Policy Reaffirmed In Bi-Partisan Broadcast

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor strongly reiterated that it will follow a strict non-partisan political policy during the coming campaign in a "Labor For Victory" broadcast featured by appeals for labor support at the polls not by spokesmen for the Democratic and Republican National Committees.

Rep. Gerald W. Landis (R.) of Indiana declared that the greatest peacetime prosperity ever enjoyed by workers in any country was experienced during Republican administrations and declared that a Republican victory in November offers the best opportunity for full post-war employment and better working conditions.

Rep. Michael J. Bradley (D.) of Pennsylvania insisted that the Democratic Party, under the leadership of President Roosevelt, has enabled labor to make greater advances in ten years than previously had been recorded in a century. He warned that the Republicans might seek to nullify these gains by cutting off funds for enforcement of labor legislation.

After the Congressmen, who were designated as their party spokesmen by the respective national committees, had wound up their debate, Philip Pearl, commentator for the AFL, said:

"Now, you have heard both sides of the case. The American Federation of Labor, in pursuance of its non-partisan political policy, does not attempt to pass judgment. It believes that members can be relied upon to exercise their good sense in deciding how to vote. Therefore the AFL does not endorse any national ticket as a whole nor any political party as a whole.

"The Federation does, however, keep careful check on the voting records of members of Congress. On the basis of these voting records, it gives its official endorsement to members of Congress who have voted in the interests of American workers and for the welfare of the nation as a whole.

"These endorsements are made regardless of the political affiliation of the particular candidate. It makes no difference to the AFL whether a member of Congress is a Democrat or a Republican. If his record shows him to be a friend of labor and a loyal American, he can count on the Federation's endorsement. Otherwise the members of the AFL are urged to defeat him.

"There you have the Federation's non-partisan political policy in a nutshell. We are confident it will work out in the coming political campaign for the election of candidates who will do everything in their power to win the war and to win the peace."

REDUCING ACCIDENTS WILL SAVE MANPOWER

New York City.—Loss of manpower through accidents in 1943 reached the equivalent of 900,000 workers withdrawn from war plants, Maj. Gen. Thomas A. Terry, commanding general of the Second Service Command, reported at the annual dinner meeting of the Greater New York Safety Council in the Hotel Pennsylvania.

Conservation of manpower, General Terry declared, was the only way to meet the developing wartime situation demanding increased production by fewer workers. He added:

"Accident prevention is the surest way to conserve our dwindling manpower. When our armed forces are fully committed in their marches to Berlin and Tokyo, we cannot afford to have our forces slowed down by lack of supplies which any effort of our part can prevent."

IBANEZ RETALIATES TO BROWDER'S CRITICISM

Washington, D. C.—Bernardo Ibanez, general secretary of the Chilean Confederation of Labor, in a letter to friends in that country, charged that Communist leader Earl Browder was guilty of a "shameful lie" in attempting to link him with Fascist forces in South America.

Ibanez, who came to this country recently as the guest of the AFL and CIO, said in his letter:

"I have been a humble but consistent anti-Fascist fighter from the time Fascism and Nazism first appeared in the world as a conditioning and anti-labor menace. I shall continue to remain anti-Nazi, as I have always been, before June 22, 1941, and after, while I have the strength to fight for land, progress and human freedom. Mr. Browder is surely not the person to give me lessons in this respect."

Meany Denounces "Suicide" Policy Of Choking-Off U. S. Air Industry

Washington, D. C.—A "warning against acceptance by the United Nations of any policy of 'freedom of the air' in the realm of post-war air transportation was sounded by George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor.

Writing in the American Federationist, official monthly magazine of the AFL, Meany cited the grave danger to American wage earners if foreign competitors were to undercut standards are far below those existing in this country are granted unlimited use of the air routes of the United States.

The AFL official commended the recent proposal of the Railway Labor Executives' Association that the post-war American flag international air service be unified in one strong system, under strict government supervision, and with opportunity for all American transport interests to be represented in ownership.

In labor's view, he said, "the near-disappearance of American flag shipping from the high seas is not an unwarrable argument against both freedom of the air and freedom of the seas. If the extreme forms of these terms called freedoms were in force, our surface ships might be driven from even our coastal trade routes, and our airships from our own domestic skyways."

Foreign competition drove American bottoms from the high seas, Mr. Meany wrote, because it was not "free and fair" competition.

"Foreign ship lines had two advantages," he said, "low wage levels and government subsidies (and often certain monopolistic advantages). All these advantages enjoyed by foreign competitors will be even more dominant factors in international air transport in the post-war period than they were in prewar surface carrier traffic.

"It is easy to understand why certain foreign interests that profited so handsomely by the decline of American shipping under freedom of the seas should be even more anxious to get the United States internationalized as policy of freedom of the air. But it is not easy to explain or condone Americans advocating a policy which all relevant experience and evidence indicate is dangerous if not suicidal for us."

Raise Pay, End Wage Freeze, Meany Demands of WLB

Summary of AFL Wage Policy

Opens Hearing With Attack On Pay Formula, Higher Living Costs

Washington, D. C.—Warning that the "Little Steel" formula has become "an economic thumbscrew to torment the working people of America and their families," AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany called upon the Government for immediate action to bring wages into balance with higher costs of living.

Opening the American Federation of Labor's case at a public hearing before a special panel of the National War Labor Board, Mr. Meany presented an irrefutable facts and figures proving that the cost of living has risen far more than 15 per cent since January 1, 1941, even on the basis of the sawdust chart of the Bureau of Labor Statistics."

"When a worker sees his pay envelope frozen while the costs of living go higher and higher and he is forbidden to take another job where he could earn more for his family," said the AFL spokesman, "this condition causes bitterness and a deep, dangerous sense of injustice."

Mr. Meany insisted that the Government had repeatedly pledged itself to maintain pre-war living standards. These promises have been broken by the failure of the economic stabilization program to check rising costs, he pointed out, wage earners have suffered a loss in real income arising from the rigid application of the "Little Steel" formula.

Since the President of the United States has the power under the Stabilization Act to correct this gross inequity, Mr. Meany pressed for approval by the special NWLB panel of the AFL petition that the board request the President:

1—To modify realistically that portion of Executive Order No. 9328 which limits wage adjustments to the present limits of the "Little Steel" formula.

2—To permit employers to apply these wage adjustments without obtaining special approval in each case from the National War Labor Board.

Mr. Meany warned that the combination of wage freezing under the Executive Order and the drive against the War Manpower regulations serves to "destroy the will to produce" on the part of the American worker at a time when the urgent need of the war is for more and more production.

He charged that the acute strain of trying to make both ends meet is forcing many workers to reduce their War Bond purchases and to cash in bonds they bought previously.

"Let's be honest with ourselves as a nation," the AFL official appealed. "Our workers are soldiers of industry, who have accomplished a volume and quality of production which assures eventual defeat of the enemy. They are workers worthy of their hire. They are the citizens from whose homes have come fighting men for our nation. They are the core of the democracy for which we fight and upon whom the future of our democracy depends.

"They must not be bled white now and junked after the war. The strength of our country and the maintenance of our democracy in great part upon fulfilling our pledges that our economy will be stabilized.

"There is running short, if we are to fulfill our pledge, we must liquidate our earlier hope of rolling back prices to 1941 levels and bring wages in balance with higher costs of living."

Taking up a new angle of the wage situation, Mr. Meany pointed out:

"Our government has completely failed to give the workers of our nation the benefits of real social insurance which other nations immediately increased when war broke out. That is one reason for all the demands for severance pay; sick leave, group insurance plans and other such substitutes which some unions are demanding and which some companies are willing to pay since the government is paying the bill plus a surcharge for excessive handling and profits. A far more realistic approach to this problem would be an honest shouldering of the public debt."

Mr. Meany, a member of the War Labor Board himself, was the first witness at the public hearing. Representatives of the American Federation of Labor from various parts of the country were scheduled to follow him with detailed reports on wage inequities in their areas. Spokesmen for a number of AFL unions also were planning to present evidence with regard to wage injustices under the "Little Steel" formula in various specific trades. The hearing will last three days after which the panel will decide whether to recommend further action by the War Labor Board. Members of the panel include Ralph T. Seward, representing the public; Charles M. Hook, Jr., representing industry, and Edward J. Volz, president of Photo-Engravers International Union, representing labor.

"Manpower Situation Good"—McNutt

Washington, D. C.—Puncturing the scares raised by Army and Navy officials, WMC Director Paul V. McNutt testified before the House Military Affairs Committee that the manpower situation is relatively good and labor shortages are causing less damage to production now than at any time since the early months of 1943."

"The vast majority of war plants have been supplied with the manpower they needed," he said. "Labor turnover has been materially reduced. Controlled materials distribution has been a success. Moreover, it has been done in a thoroughly democratic manner, with an unprecedented degree of participation by labor, management and local communities."

McNutt pointed out that "the astonishing rise in productivity" of workers has reduced the manpower requirements in munitions industries, and that as a matter of fact, the most critical manpower shortages are largely outside of munitions—in such "supporting activities" as the railroads.

He argued that the present voluntary setup of recruiting manpower, which operates through labor-management committees, should be retained.

"It would be tragic to throw away the work done by these committees and set up a type of manpower mobilization which puts the emphasis on direct control and compulsion rather than upon cooperation," the manpower chief asserted. "That would be to substitute the military or bureaucratic processes for the democratic."

Green Accepts Air League Post

New York City.—Thomas H. Beck, president of the Empire State Building Association and its problems is of great importance to our national health and welfare, both during the war and in the peace to come. Our young people are definitely aviation-minded. Encouragement and development of this interest through broadening this training program is an important work in which I wish you and your associates every success."

The league is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization, which will aid the Civil Air Patrol in all of its activities and which seeks to make America first in the air.

"Continued and growing familiarity of our coming generations with aviation

JEWISH LABOR GROUP STARTS NEWS SERVICE

New York City.—The Jewish Labor Committee announced the issuance of a newsletter called "Labor Reports" which proposes to expose Fascist forces in America. The first issue will feature an article by Associate Justice Murphy of the U. S. Supreme Court. The following issue will include an article by Wendell L. Willkie. News stories, features, cartoons and other pictorial material will round out the service.

Labor papers can receive this service without charge by writing to the Jewish Labor Committee, 175 E. Broadway, New York City.

TEAMSTERS ORGANIZE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

Memphis, Tenn.—The Southern Conference of Teamsters & Chauffeurs Unions, composed of 60 local unions in 10 southern states with a membership of more than 35,000, was formally organized.

Memphis was named official headquarters of the new organization. James R. Hamilton of Oklahoma City was elected president, F. L. Medlin of Nashville vice president and John Biggers secretary. States whose unions have joined the conference are Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee. North and South Carolina are expected to join soon.

DEFERMENTS ALLOWED IN CERTAIN INDUSTRIES

Washington, D. C.—The War Production Board issued recently a preliminary definition of fifteen critical industries in which highly skilled and irreplaceable men under twenty-six may be deferred.

The WPB listed the following production items as "critical and urgent": Ducks, an amphibious combat vehicle; tires and tubes for aircraft, combat and heavy-duty vehicles, including tire cord, fabric and molds; radar; rockets; tritium components for trucks 2½ tons and heavier, including truck trailers and Class 1 and 2 tractors; research and development work specifically assigned by the technical services of the Army; Army and Navy combat planes according to a list of specified types and factories to be forwarded later; landing craft and submarines.

Also aircraft carriers; high capacity naval ammunition; maintenance of ships and aircraft for the Navy; all tankers constructed for the Maritime Commission, and combat loaded cargo and transport ships.

ILGWU SUBSCRIBES TO WAR BOND CONCERT

New York City.—The International Garment Workers Union has purchased fifty $1,000 war bonds for fifty tickets to the Arturo Toscanini-NBC symphony orchestra war bond concert April 18. The concert is sponsored by Local 802, American Federation of Musicians, of which Toscanini is an honorary life member.